

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 03213 220755Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 3213

EXDIS

SECSTATE FOR HARROP

ROME FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINS, PBOR, MASS, ET, SO, SA
SUBJ: APPROACH TO ACTING ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
ON POSSIBLE ETHIOPIAN RETALIATION FOR CONTINUED
SOMALI INSURGENCY IN OGADEN

REF: JIDDA 5345 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN VIEW OF RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS UNDERTAKING PLANNING FOR A POSSIBLE RAID IN REINFORCED BATTALION STRENGTH ACROSS THE SOMALIA BORDER AND/OR AIR STRIKES AGAINST A MAJOR SOMALI CITY, AMBASSADOR SUGGESTS APPROACH TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ALERTING HIM THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD RESULT IN ADVERSE REACTION IN WASHINGTON AND THAT AMBASSADOR UNABLE PREDICT EFFECT ON LONG STANDING PROPOSAL TO SEND MILITARY SURVEY TEAM TO SOMALIA. REQUESTS INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

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1. EMBASSY HAS RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS UNDERTAKING PLANNING FOR A POSSIBLE RAID IN REINFORCED BATTALION STRENGTH ACROSS THE SOMALI BORDER, MOST LOGICALLY AT WSLF CAMPS IN NORTHERN SOMALI AND ON TOWARD HARGEISA. RAID MIGHT WELL BE ACCOMPANIED BY STRIKES AGAINST HARGEISA AND OTHER TOWNS IN THE AREA. AN ALTERNATIVE WOULD

BE A STRIKE AGAINST MOGADISCIO ITSELF, PROBABLY THE AIRPORT, ALTHOUGH THIS IS LESS LIKELY BECAUSE OF THE DISTANCE, THE FACT THAT PLANES WOULD HAVE TO CARRY DROP TANKS REDUCING ORDNANCE THEY COULD CARRY, AND THAT THEY WOULD ONLY HAVE FUEL FOR ONE QUICK PASS OVER THE CITY, PROBABLY TO STRAFE AIRPORT. WHATEVER ACTION TAKEN WOULD BE RETALIATION FOR CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL OF INSURGENCY IN OGADEN WITH EVIDENT SOMALI SUPPORT, INCLUDING SECOND ATTACK ON DJIBOUTI/ADDIS ABABA RAIL LIFELINE. IF ETHIOPIANS WERE TO TAKE ACTION IT WOULD BE AS RESULT OF A CONCLUSION THAT THE RETALIATORY AIR STRIKES CARRIED OUT TO DATE HAVE NOT BEEN SUFFICIENT TO MAKE SOMALIS DESIST.

2. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT PMGSE ACTUALLY INTENDS TO MAKE SUCH A RETALIATORY STRIKE BUT INFORMATION WAS THAT PLANNING WAS FOR A RAID AS EARLY AS JULY 24. IT MAY BE RELEVANT THAT CHAIRMAN MENGISTU DID NOT MENTION OGADEN AT ALL IN MEETING WITH ME JULY 21. PERHAPS DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN. IN FRAGILE BUT IMPROVING STATUS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IT WOULD APPEAR PRUDENT TO AVOID SURPRISES. WHETHER ANY APPROACH BY US WOULD PREVENT OR DELAY ANY RETALIATORY RAID, PMGSE WOULD AT LEAST KNOW IN ADVANCE WHAT OUR REACTION WOULD BE.

3. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER MAJOR DAWIT HAS INVITED ME TO FAREWELL LUNCHEON FOR CANADIAN AMBASSADOR JULY 23. UNLESS
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INSTRUCTED TO THE CONTRARY, I WOULD PROPOSE TO SAY PRIVATELY TO MAJOR DAWIT THAT I HAD NOTED THAT CHAIRMAN HAD NOT MENTIONED OGADEN JULY 21. USG HAD BEEN PLEASED BY CORRECT AND STATESMANLIKE RESTRAINT OF PMGSE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED POLICY, IN NOT PURSUING WITHDRAWING SOMALI FORCES ACROSS THE SOMALI BORDER. DESPITE WITHDRAWAL, INSURGENCY IN OGADEN HAD RESUMED AND LEVEL WAS APPARENTLY QUITE HIGH. US HAD NOTED TWO ATTACKS ON VITAL DJIBOUTI/ADDIS RAIL LINE. US HAD ALSO NOTED RETALIATORY STRAFING OF SOMALI TOWNS BY PMGSE AIR FORCE AS A RESULT OF PROVOCATION. INSURGENCY IN OGADEN CONTINUED. WHILE US HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER PMGSE INTENDED TAKE FURTHER ACTION, IN THE SPIRIT OF A FRANK DIALOG BETWEEN US WHICH THE CHAIRMAN HAD CALLED FOR IN THE MEETING JULY 21, AMBASSADOR DID WISH THE CHAIRMAN TO KNOW THAT A LAND RAID ACROSS THE SOMALI BORDER OR MAJOR AIR STRIKES ON SOMALI TARGETS WOULD RESULT IN ADVERSE REACTION IN WASHINGTON. FURTHERMORE, WHILE I HAD JUST RECENTLY LEFT WASHINGTON, THE SITUATION THERE WAS OFTEN VERY FLEXIBLE, AND I COULD NOT PREDICT WHAT EFFECT SUCH PMGSE ACTION WOULD HAVE ON MILITARY SURVEY MISSION TO SOMALIA, LONG UNDER DISCUSSION WITH SOMALIA, AS PMGSE AWARE.

4. I BELIEVE THAT THE LATTER REFERENCE TO THE MILITARY SURVEY TEAM IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE I WAS, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, FRANKLY SHOCKED BY SOME OF THE LANGUAGE IN THE REPORTING TELEGRAM ON UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S CONVERSATION IN JIDDA (REFTEL) TO THE EFFECT THAT WE HAVE BEEN "ON THE VERGE" OF SENDING THE MILITARY SURVEY TEAM AND THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO GET THE SOMALIS TO STOP THEIR INSURGENCY IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT "PROCEED WITH OUR MILITARY SURVEY TEAM". MY CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE, JUST BEFORE MY DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON, LED ME TO QUITE THE CONTRARY CONCLUSION, THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF SENDING THE TEAM WAS DECREASING, ALTHOUGH WE HAD NOT CANCELED IT AND THAT THE CAUSALITY AND MOTIVATION WAS EXACTLY THE OTHER WAY AROUND: WE WERE NOT SENDING THE TEAM BECAUSE OF THE INSURGENCY

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IN THE OGADEN. IT WAS NOT THAT WE WISHED TO HAVE THE INSURGENCY CEASE SO WE COULD SEND THE TEAM. I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT WE REALLY INTEND TO REWARD AN AGGRESSOR. IT WOULD FLY IN THE FACE OF ALL US POLICY SINCE THE 1930'S, AND EVEN WHILE INVOKING THE NEUTRALITY RESOLUTIONS, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELY EVIDENTLY SYMPATHIZED WITH THE ETHIOPIANS AGAINST THE ITALIANS AND PREVENTED POL SHIPMENTS FROM THE US TO ITALY IN US CONTROLLED SHIPPING THUS RESULTING IN REPEATED ITALIAN PROTESTS. ALL THIS FROM STATE DEPT PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS.

5. PLEASE ADVISE URGENTLY.
CHAPIN

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